

PROVIDER HEALTH EDUCATION & RESOURCES

JUNE 2025

June National Safety Awareness Month

Using Medicines Safely:

The 2 types of medicine are prescription and over-the-counter (OTC).

Prescription medicines are medicines you can get only with a prescription (order) from your doctor. You get these medicines from a pharmacy.

These medicines are only safe to use if your name is on the prescription. Using someone else's prescription medicine can be very harmful.

Sometimes you can choose between a generic medicine and a brand name medicine. Generic and brand name medicines work the same way, but generic medicine usually costs less.

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or insurance company for more information about generic medicines

[Generic Drugs: Questions & Answers | FDA](#)

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are medicines you can buy at a store without a prescription.

Some examples of OTC medicines include:

- Cold and flu medicines
- Pain medicines like aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen
- Allergy medicines
- Sleep aids
- Toothpaste with fluoride

All OTC medicines come with a Drug Facts label. The information on this label can help you choose the right OTC medicine for your symptoms.

The Drug Facts label also gives you instructions for using the medicine safely. OTC medicines can cause side effects or harm if you use too much or don't use them correctly.

Following the directions on the Drug Facts label will lower your chances of side effects.

[The Over-the-Counter Drug Facts Label | FDA](#)

